

MEDIA RELEASE

**Attention: News Director
For Immediate Release
February 21, 2007**



**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
DAVID L. HUBER
UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
Western District of Kentucky**

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GINSENG DEALER SENTENCED

David L. Huber, United States Attorney for the Western District of Kentucky, announced today that **JOHN MORGAN**, of 130 Lost City Road, Russellville, Kentucky, **was sentenced** to pay a \$5,000 fine and pay a \$25.00 Special Penalty Assessment for aiding and abetting the sale of wild ginseng in interstate commerce taken out of season and without a valid ginseng dealer's license as required under Kentucky law. The charges are in violation of Title 16, United States Code, Sections 3372(a)(2)(B) and 3373(d)(2), the Lacey Act.

The sentenced was imposed by United States Magistrate Judge James D. Moyer in United States District Court, Bowling Green, Kentucky

Morgan, a ginseng dealer, sold wild ginseng to another dealer knowing that the ginseng would be sold in interstate commerce, was dug out of season (August 15 through December 31 of each year), and that he, (**Morgan**) did not possess a valid ginseng dealer's license as required under Kentucky law.

The Lacey Act makes it a Federal violation to import, export, transport, sell, receive, acquire, or purchase in interstate or foreign commerce any fish, wildlife or plants, take, possessed, transported, or sold in violation of any law or regulation of any state.

The wild ginseng trade in Kentucky is an 8 million dollar industry. Kentucky is the largest supplier of wild ginseng in the United States, averaging approximately 16% of the national harvest

annually. The average wholesale value of wild ginseng to a root digger is approximately \$300 per pound.

The prosecution of **Morgan** and others marks the culmination of a 21 month investigation by the United States Fish & Wildlife Service, Office of Law Enforcement, with the cooperation of the Kentucky Department of Agriculture, into the illegal trade in wild Kentucky ginseng, specifically with interstate commerce in unlawfully purchased wild ginseng by ginseng dealers in violation of the Lacey Act. Charges against other individuals are anticipated.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Randy Ream and was investigated by the United States Fish & Wildlife Service.

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